

VICTORY CELEBRATION

In

MEMORIUM

Of

REVEREND JAMES CLEVELAND



SERVICE OF TRIUMPH

of

REV. JAMES CLEVELAND

December 5, 1931 — February 9, 1991

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1991

11:00 A.M.

SHRINE CIVIC AUDITORIUM

649 West Jefferson Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90007

• OFFICIANTS •

Elder Eugene Bryant

Assistant Minister

Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church

Los Angeles, California

Dr. Kenneth Ulmer

2nd Vice President • Gospel Music Workshop of America

Sr. Minister

Faithful Central Baptist Church

Los Angeles, California

Rev. Lawrence Roberts

Pastor

First Baptist Church

Nutley, NJ



OBITUARY

*During the brilliance of a new day — FEBRUARY 9, 1991 —
as it winged its way boldly past midday — 12:56 P.M. —*

**"GOD LOOKED UPON HIM WITH GENTLE EYES AND TENDER COMPASSION
AND CLAIMED HIM FOR HIS OWN!"**

REVEREND JAMES CLEVELAND FINALLY TRIUMPHED!

IN THE BEGINNING...

JAMES CLEVELAND was born in the windy city of Chicago, Illinois on December 5, 1931, to Rosie Lee and Benjamin Cleveland. Almost instantly the beginning of his soon-to-be-revealed greatness began to emerge humbly and exuberantly. As a constant companion to his grandmother, Annie, as she carried him to the worship services and choir rehearsals at the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago, James was fondly known as the "mascot" of the choir — then under the direction and tutelage of the "Father of Gospel," Thomas A. Dorsey. As a small lad, James began to nurture his God-given talents to sing and play the piano. Not only did his singing talent evolve from mimicking every choral part in the Pilgrim Church choir, the magnificence of his gospel piano stylings began with his first "piano" — the window still in the family flat. Teaching himself the skill of playing the piano — for a long time in only one key — James courageously and adamantly offered his services as a piano accompanist to whomever would allow him to play.

JAMES attended elementary and secondary schools in Chicago with classmates such as Cora Martin and instructors which included Maurice E. McGehee — both prominent forces in gospel. Beginning as a paper boy to the late Mahalia Jackson, James eventually became a member of the Mahalia Jackson Singers in addition to the Thorne Crusaders, Gospel All-Stars of New York, Roberta Martin Singers and the Caravans of Chicago, the Meditation Singers, to name a few.

Learning all the gospel masters had to offer, James struck out on his own and began to form groups of his own. In addition to the Gospel Chimes, combining the best of these groups with his own unique, creative genius, James organized the Cleveland Singers. Throughout James Cleveland's gospel sojourn, in spite of several hiatuses to pursue other gospel vistas and numerous member changes, the Cleveland Singers remained James' constant support and inspiration, traveling exclusively with him as a dynamic force in the world of gospel music.

FROM CHICAGO TO DETROIT TO LOS ANGELES...

For James, humbleness was a virtue and it catapulted him to greatness as a man, steadfastness in his commitment to God, awesomeness in the enlargement of his talents, and the limitness of the vistas to which he was able to give of himself and his talents. In Detroit to develop the Radio Choir at New Bethel Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. C.L. Franklin, James touched the life of Rev. Franklin's daughter, Aretha, first as her babysitter and tutor for her piano lessons and ultimately as her inspired, lifelong friend. In collaboration with Rev. Charles Craig and Rev. Leslie Bush in the '50's, James Cleveland's first recording hit was born at Detroit's Prayer Tabernacle. These three young men organized the Tabernacle with James serving as Minister of Music. The "Voices of Tabernacle" — the 100-voice choir — recorded "The Love of God" which was an instant hit and the awakening to the lure

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and magnificence of large-choir gospel presentations. Subsequent record hits with the Angelic Choir of the First Baptist Church in Nutley, New Jersey, pastored by Rev. Lawrence Roberts, established James as the masterful writer, arranger and innovator of the large group, gospel choir sound. It was with the Angelic Choir that James' biggest and still most loved recording "PEACE BE STILL" was made.

Including "Peace Be Still", James recorded on the Savory Record label six gold albums which generated such gospel "classics" as "I'll Do His Will," "Lord, Help Me to Hold Out," "Jesus Is The Best Thing That Ever Happened To Me" and many, many more.

In 1964 at the invitation of his friend, Annette May Thomas, who became his manager, confident, assistant, sister, never-ending support and supporter, James moved to Los Angeles where he remained in residence until his death. The move to Los Angeles produced even greater gospel avenues and served as a "booster shot" for the gospel resurgence which was to emanate from and center around James Cleveland. Among the many fans and Los Angeles gospel singers emerged the Southern California Community Choir which James founded and with whom James enjoyed many new "gospel firsts." In 1973, James and Aretha Franklin received a Grammy for the album, recorded with the Southern California Community Choir, entitled "Amazing Grace" which at that date had sold over two million copies; his first Grammy nomination occurred in the late 60's with the Choir's album "Come See About Me"; two other Grammy awards were received with the Choir — one for the 1974 "In The Ghetto Album" and the other for the 1977 "Live at Carnegie Hall." In 1978, a national television audience witnessed the live performance of a gospel song by Rev. James Cleveland and the Choir during the televised Grammy Awards Presentation in Los Angeles.

A SERVANT OF GOD SERVES HIS PEOPLE...

An humble, great, giving person, James Cleveland had an insatiable appetite to share his expertise, good fortune and influence with others. In spite of previous outpourings of himself and his talent, James had a yearning to do more. In 1968, prompted by a God-inspired vision to satisfy his cravings to be of service, with the assistance of several chosen loyal friends and gospel music enthusiasts, Rev. Cleveland organized in the Detroit meeting the GOSPEL MUSIC WORKSHOP OF AMERICA — an organization with regular membership of 20,000+ gospel music fans, students, teachers, experts, performers and researchers. A dream come true through this workshop, James was able to provide a vehicle to inspire others to gospel, train them, inform them and support them. Today the majority of the gospel ministries and career successes must give as their launching pad — James Cleveland's Gospel Music Workshop and filling station — of American organization. In addition to inspiring and educating, the Workshop rewards. As a culminating event at the annual convention of the Workshop, "Gospel Excellence Awards" presented in lavish style, are given to members as well as nonmembers, of the Workshop for a "job well done" with national appeal.

FROM STOREFRONTS TO PALACES TO STOREFRONTS TO PALACES TO ETC...

Whether the stage was a humble platform in a church housed in a renovated store front or a prestigious concert stage in Europe, the excitements and inspiration of James Cleveland's

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presentation of the gospel was awesome and unflattering. First and foremost to James was the message, and every opportunity, regardless of the location, was important. This commitment was contagious and made James and his gospel ministry the most sought-after of this century. From ghetto store-front churches, James appeared on concert stages from Albany to Africa, from Pittsburg to Paris, from Montgomery to Monaco, from San Francisco to Spoleto. James' dedication to God, His music and the ministry carried him from "no house" to the White House — in special performance for the then President Jimmy Carter. James was constantly called upon to put "true gospel" into any situation. In collaboration with Quincy Jones, James arranged the vocal renditions for the soundtrack album for the historical, blockbuster series "Roots," for which James was nominated for a Grammy. James also arranged, trained and directed choirs and choral background presentations for several albums, as well as made guest appearances, for Elton John, Ray Charles and Cleo Lane; blockbuster film projects of "Blues Brothers", "The Idolmaker" and Gladys Knight's first movie project, "Pipe Dreams." As an inspired, effective record producer, James unselfishly paved the way for many singers to be introduced to record companies, assisted in obtaining contracts for them, trained and produced the resulting recording sessions and even lent his prestigious name to introduce the new project to the listening public.

In 1980, Rev. Cleveland, along with Natalie Cole, starred in the television special "IN THE SPIRIT" which was filmed in North Hampton, England for Granada Television (BBC). In August, 1983, accompanied by the Southern California Community Choir, starring along with Andrae and Saundra Crouch and Shirley Ceasar, Rev. Cleveland took gospel to Israel and performed in live concert at the "Sultan's Pool" (an amphitheatre) in Jerusalem. This history-making concert tour in Israel was procured by Barry White.

A GOD-CALLED MINISTER AND PASTOR...

In November, 1970, James Cleveland organized and stepped forth as pastor of the Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church in Los Angeles. Beginning with sixty charter members, the Church's membership has grown to in excess of 7,000 persons who have stepped forth to add their names to the Church's membership rolls. Beginning humbly in a small remodeled store, the Church grew and in April, 1984, Pastor Cleveland led the Cornerstone membership in a victory march to their new church home — a magnificent sanctuary, building and grounds which were transformed from a supermarket structure. Wanting only the best for God's house, Rev. Cleveland placed in the sanctuary an altar made of marble stone shipped from Italy. Lighting the sanctuary is a one-of-its-kind cross made of 800 red and white lights. The \$1,500,000 new church was the results of Pastor Cleveland's vision, God's anointing and continuous blessings on the works of this servant, James.

"MAY THE WORK I DO SPEAK FOR ME..."

Even though James never looked for high accolades and abhorred the "star treatment," numerous awards were heaped upon him. James was the recipient of an honorary Doctorate degree from Temple Bible College, the Trend-Setter award from Billboard Magazine (the first recipient), Ebony Magazine's Artists Award, National Association of Negro Musicians' award, several times the recipient of the Image Awards, held hundreds of keys to major cities

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throughout the United States, as well as countless local awards from adoring fans and grateful followers of the gospel.

On Wednesday, August 12, 1981, a very special honor was bestowed upon Rev. Cleveland by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce when they unveiled a "Star" in his name on the famed Hollywood Walk of Fame — another "first" for gospel singing and gospel singers.

James Cleveland's contribution to the Gospel as a child of God, musician, songwriter, singer, minister and pastor will forever be felt and used as a foundation and inspiration to the gospel ministry.

CARING AND SHARING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS...

He leaves to cherish his memory and anticipate a glorious reunion one daughter, La Shone Cleveland of Los Angeles; three sisters (all of Los Angeles), Marian McCoy, Rebecca Brooks and Vicki Cleveland; two brothers, Benjamin and Gerald Cleveland of Chicago; nieces Alishi Fisher, Katherine Ackingbade, La Tonia Adams, Pamela Adams, & Ashley Smith; nephews Jeffery and Antonio Adams; special friend, Jean Ervin; God-sons he reared from pre-teens; Jeffery Daniel, Andre McIsaac Cleveland, and Sidney Harris; God-daughter, Tammy Landry; the Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church and GMWA families, adoring fans and a host of friends; and most of all, his closest friend and manager, Annette May Thomas and her family.

James left this earthly expression but never shall leave our hearts. His sister, Marian, offers this parting thought for rededication to the works of James Cleveland of which we are all a part:

DON'T QUIT

*When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low, and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sign.
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if must, but don't you quit!*

*Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow.
You may succeed with another blow.*

*Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt.
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far.
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worse,
that you must not quit.*

THE CELEBRATION

11:00 A.M.

MUSICAL REFLECTIONS

PROCESSIONAL "We Are On Our Way" Cornertstone Mass Choir

THE WRITTEN WORD The Old Testament Scripture Rev. Robert McKinney
New Testament Scripture Rev. Timothy Price

INVOCATION Rev. Laverna Mason

HYMN OF PRAISE "I'll Fly Away"

COMMEDATIONS

Hon. TOM BRADLEY, Major of Los Angeles
Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS
Senator DIANE WATSON
Councilman ROBERT FARRELL
Supervisor KENNETH HAHN

SELECTIONS

SPEAKERS (1½ min. each)

- Rev., William Turner, Pastor
New Relevation B. C., Pasadena, CA
- Dr. J. C. Wade, Sr., Pastor Emeritus
Salem B. C., Omaha, Nebraska
- Rev. Clay Evans, Pastor
Fellowship M.B.C., Chicago, IL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Edna Tatum

SELECTIONS

RESOLUTIONS Annette May Thomas

SELECTIONS

REMARKS (1½ min. each)

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Evang. Flossie Taylor | • Bishop R. W. McMurray |
| • Rev. Charles Davis | • Evang. Wanda Davis |
| • Rev. Reather Glover | • Edgar O'Neal |
| • Fred Mendelsohn | • Milton Biggham |
| • Dr. Margaret P. Douroux | |

SELECTIONS

THE CELEBRATION CONTINUED

OBITUARY (Read Silently) Organ Medley
(No Ways Tired/Peace Be Still)

SELECTIONS

TRIUMPHANT MESSAGE Dr. Edward V. Hill
Pastor
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Los Angeles

PARTING VIEW
(Family Only)

RECESSIONAL

With Grateful THANKS to these "TRIBUTE" and
"CELEBRATION" MUSICAL FRIENDS!

- The CARAVANS
SHIRLEY CEASAR
ALBERTINA WALKER
CASSIETTA GEORGE
DOROTHY NORWOOD
- The CLEVELAND SINGLERS
- WILLIAMS BROTHERS
- STEVIE WONDER
- TREMAINE HAWKINS
- LOS ANGELES MASS CHOIR OF GMWA
- MIKKI HOWARD
- SOUTHERN CALIF. COMMUNITY CHOIR
- STEPHANIE MILLS
- LOS ANGELES GOSPEL MESSENGERS
- KURT CARR SINGERS
- DIONNE WARWICK
- THOMAS WHITFIELD & SINGERS
- CRAIG BROTHERS OF DETROIT
- ANDRAE & SAUNDRA CROUCH
- CHARLES FOLD
- LAURA LEE & THE MEDITATIONS
- MINISTER DARRYL COLEY
- NORTHERN CALIF. MASS CHOIR OF GMWA
- RICHARD SMALLWOOD
- DANNIBELL
- JOHN P. KEE

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Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church

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*"If any should ever write my life
story. . ."*

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James H. McMillan

James H. McMillan

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James H. McMillan

James H. McMillan

*Jesus is the best thing that ever
happen to me.*

Rev. Dr. Harry Coley

Rev. Jesse Jackson

Reverend James Cleveland

James H. McMillan

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

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Service of Communion and Benediction
Cornerstone Institutional Baptist Church
Los Angeles, California

Service of Committal
Inglewood Park Cemetary
Inglewood, California

Fellowship Hour
Trinity Baptist Church
2040 West Jefferson Boulevard
Los Angeles, California
Dr. Dumas Harshaw — Senior Minister